



**George Washington and Jefferson National Forests  
Clinch Ranger District  
9416 Coeburn Mountain Rd.  
Wise, VA 24293**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Forest Service Temporarily Closes Roaring Branch Trail**

**Wise, Va** – The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture will temporarily close the Roaring Branch section of the Stone Mountain Trail in Wise County to remove several large hazardous trees. The trail will close for 3 – 4 days in the near future to allow Forest Service crews to remove dead and dying hemlock trees impacted by the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid; a non-native invasive species affecting hemlocks throughout southwest Virginia.

Clinch District Ranger Jorge Hersel explains, “Several large trees and branches have already fallen across the Roaring Branch section of the trail. Visible hazard trees that remain will be removed to prevent from falling across the trail when the public may be in the area.”

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) is a tiny destructive insect that first appeared in North America in the 1920s. HWA causes extensive tree mortality by feeding on tree sap at the base of hemlock needles. This feeding deprives the tree of vital nutrients, causing the needles to change color and eventually fall off. Without needles the tree starves to death, usually within 3 – 5 years. In 2006 HWA was first discovered on the Clinch Ranger District in Dickenson County, Virginia near the John W. Flannagan Dam and Reservoir. Since this first infestation, HWA has been identified in many other locations across the District. Several successful methods of HWA treatment is utilized on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, including spray treatments, soil injection, and releasing predatory beetles. To learn more about the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, visit:  
[http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/disturbance/invasive\\_species/hwa/](http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/disturbance/invasive_species/hwa/).

For additional information on the temporary closure of Roaring Branch, contact the Clinch Ranger District at (276) 328-2931.

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